

A
 D E F E N C E
 O F T H E
Church of England,
 F R O M T H E
 C H A R G E
 O F
 S C H I S M and H E R E S I E,

As laid against it by the *H. Dodwell*

Indicator of the Deprived Bishops.

By Edw. Welchman

*Quodcumque in rebus Religionis Reges Israel fecerunt, id Ei,
 (sc. Regi. Angl.) faciendi jns est ac potestas.
 Abiathar ipsum, si ita meruit, Pontificatu abdicandi.*

Andrews Ep. Winton. Tort.

L O N D O N :

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DEFENCE

Church of England

THE

CHURCH

OF

THE



A
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

THAT my Reader may not deceive himself, in expecting to find more in these Sheets, than is really contain'd in them, I have thought good to acquaint him, That I do not pretend to answer the whole of that Book, call'd, *The Vindication of the Deprived Bishops*, &c. but only so much of it, as every Member of the Church of *England* is concern'd

A Preface

cern'd in. The greatest part of it is taken up in impurging the Authority of a *Baroccian* MS. lately translated by Mr. *Hody*, and published in hopes that it might have been of some use to allay the inordinate Heats raised in some Men, by reason of the Deprivation of the late Archbishop of *Canterbury*, and some other Bishops. Now whether Mr. *Hody* did weakly in publishing an impertinent Book, or disingenuously in omitting any material Passages of it, is a Matter only of private concern. The Enquiry is his proper business, and 'twould have been but rudeness in me, to have offer'd at a justification of him, who is so well qualify'd to justify himself. But the Book, so far as I have medled with it, is an Accusation laid against our whole Communion; and from which it becomes every Man to defend

to the Reader.

defend himself and his Brethren, so well as he can. If I have done it sufficiently, it will save some body else the pains; if not, I hope some one, more able, will undertake it. Thus much I am sure of, that tho' we have to do with a powerful Adversary, our Cause is very fairly defensible.

T H E

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A
D E F E N C E
OF THE
Church of England.
FROM THE
C H A R G E
OF
SCHISM and HERESIE, &c.

RENDER unto Caesar the things that are
Caesars, and to God the things that are
Gods, was the Answer of our blessed Sa-
viour to the Jews captiously asking him,
whether they should pay Tribute or not? An An-
swer worthy of him that made it, and which he
undoubtedly design'd for a standing Rule to his Fol-
lowers even to the end of the World. Accord-
B ingly

ingly our Church of *England* hath, ever since the Reformation, most religiously observed it; never claiming to her self any Authority, that is of right the civil Magistrates; nor parting with any which God hath reserved, as it were to himself, to be executed by spiritual Persons. And thus to do is in truth the Interest, as well as Duty, of all Churches whatsoever; the Clergy having no greater security for the peaceable enjoyment of their own Rights, than by suffering the civil Magistrate quietly to enjoy his: For we may observe that whensoever any Man begins to encroach upon another, the injured Party is apt to make Reprials; nor is there any thing more common, than for those who are grasping at other Men's Possessions, to be deprived of their own. But yet we are tax'd with a departure from this Rule, by the Vindicator of the deprived Bishops, who cries out upon us, as if, in allowing the validity of their Deprivation, we had given away a Power unalienably belonging to the Church; that we have invested lay Persons with spiritual Authority, and that we have hereby undermined our whole Religion, and put it in the power of the civil Magistrate utterly to subvert it, whensoever he pleaseth; and lastly, that in so doing, we have incurr'd the guilt of Heresie. A dreadful Charge this is, and it concerns us, as we love our Souls, impartially to examine whether it be justly laid against us or not. Wherefore that I may neither deceive my self, nor others, in a Matter of so great moment, I have thought fit here to set down our Authors Argument, not omitting any thing of force in it, using, for the
most

most part, his own words; and it is to this Effect, viz.

‘That in the Age of *St. Cyprian*, the Church
own’d no Power of the secular Magistrate to
deprive Bishops of their purely spiritual Power,
and the Church as a Society distinct from the
State, subsisted on their not owning it, even as
to a Deprivation of their particular Districts.

§. 16.
Vindicati-
on of the
deprived
Bishops
part 1.

The Christians then, and in all former Persecu-
tions, did own themselves bound to adhere to
their Bishops, tho’ set up and maintain’d against
the Consent of the secular Magistrate, and this
they did upon such Principles as we find in
St. Cyprian, viz. That all the Benefits of the Gos-
pel were confined to the visible Communion of the
Church; that this Communion could not appear
but by visible Communion with the Bishop, as
Head of that Church and Principle of its Unity:
Who was every particular Man’s Bishop, was di-
stinguishable only by the visible Districts in which
themselves lived, and to which the Bishop was
supposed to have a Title whether the Magistrate
would or not.

By this adhering to his Bishop, every particu-
lar Christian assured himself of his Right to
Church-Privileges, and held Communion with
all other Bishops, and consequently with the
Catholick Church, by reason of the mutual Ob-
ligation all Bishops of the World had, to ratifie the
Acts of particular Districts.

Thus it appears that the obligation of particular
Districts, without consent of the Magistrate, was
then Catholick Doctrine; and therefore our present

Bishops notwithstanding their Lay-deprivation, are still Bishops, even of their particular Districts, and the obligations of the Clergy and Laity therein still as firm as ever.

§. 17. Thence it follows, secondly, That Anti-bishops consecrated in Districts, no otherwise vacated than by the Power of the secular Magistrate, are by the Principles of the earliest Catholick Church, no Bishops at all, nor so much as Members of the Church. They are no Bishops, because there can be but one Bishop over one District; and therefore the Episcopal Authority cannot be derived upon a second, till the first have lost his Title to it; and if the Anti-bishop be not Bishop of that District, he can be no Bishop at all; because he can be no Bishop of the Catholick Church, who is not Bishop of a particular District, *Secundus est nullus*. Not Member of the Church, because he cannot be any Member of the Church Catholick, who is not a Member of some particular Church, and out of his own Body an Anti bishop casts himself by assuming to himself the Title of Head thereof when it had an Head before.

§. 18. And thirdly, all who profess themselves one with Anti-bishops, so divided from the Church, were look'd upon as themselves divided also. This

§. 19. involves not only the Subjects of an Anti-bishop, but even the Bishops that hold any Communion with him: And with respect to our Case, all the Bishops will be involved, which communicate either with the principal Schismatics, or Schismatical Consecrators, and all Communicants with such Bishops.

And

And lastly all who were (on those Principles) §. 20.
thought divided from the visible Communion of
the Catholick Church, were also thought deprived
of all the invisible Benefits of Church-Com-
munion; *thought deprived*, i. e. were really deprived;
for our Author don't suppose that they,
which thought so, thought amiss.

Bless me, what a Charge is here? It sweeps
down an whole Kingdom at a blow; nay, no Bo-
dy can tell how far it reacheth. The foreign
Churches had best look to themselves, and keep
off from having any thing to do with us at their
Peril. Let them own ever a Bishop in *England*,
besides the deprived Bishops, and they are undone;
they will be involved too in the same Condemna-
tion. As for us, we are in a miserable forlorn
State, the Gates of Grace and Mercy are shut up-
on us, our Alars no better than those of *Dan* and
Bethel, and our Assemblies for Worship but Schif-
matical, nay Heretical Conventicles: For as our
Author will have it, we are guilty not only of
Schism, but of Heresie also, which he thus would
prove.

He saith, That we do not only separate, which §. 23.
alone were Schism, but we also justify our Separation
by Principles, which is Heresie.

For Heresie doth not always imply an Error in §. 24.
Fundamentals: For he that separates upon a bare
Opinion, is guilty of the greater Sin, and even a
Truth may make an Heresie, if it be no way con-
ducive to the good of Souls, and yet the Maintain-
ers will separate from their Opponents.

Such Opinions as are not of their own nature §. 25.
He-

Heretical, begin to be so when they begin to be Characteristical of distinct Communions; and that they do, not only when Men designedly separate from others, on that very Account, because they are not of the same Opinions ; but also when they venture upon such Practices on Account of their singular Opinions, wherein others cannot communicate with them, because they cannot joyn with them in those their singular Opinions. Then plainly the differing in such Opinions, makes a difference of Communion unavoidable.

- Here is an uncommon Notion of Heresie advanced, but 'tis undoubtedly the true ; and I heartily thank our Author for it : It will stand us in better stead than he thought of. But further, he saith, That we are guilty of Heresie, even in the common acceptation, as it signifies an Error in Fundamentals. For the Church's being a Society is a fundamental Doctrin, at least as to us, and to all Benefits we can pretend to, by being Members of the Church. Nay, 'tis a Fundamental of the greatest Consequence, because the preservation of all other Fundamentals depends thereupon : And therefore the Anti-bishops, and all that own them, err fundamentally, because they cannot be defended to be valid Bishops, but by Principles fundamentally destructive of the Church, as a Society distinct from the State, in a time of Persecution : Such as is this, that the lay Magistrate hath Power to deprive Bishops, even with regard to Conscience ; which cannot be asserted, without asserting withal, That the Authority of the Church, even as to Spirituals, is in Conscience the right of the civil
- §. 26.
§. 27.
§. 29.
§. 28.

civil Magistrate : Whence it would follow that no Man could justly challenge such Authority against the will of the Magistrate ; and therefore under Persecution the Church must cease to be a Society, because it would want Government, without which no Society can subsist.

This is in short the whole of our Authors Argument, and it must be acknowledged that he hath throughout it, shewn himself a Master of Discourse. Give him but his footing and he would shake the World ; but it his Unhappiness that fails him : For the Principles whereon he builds will not support the weight he layeth on them. For first he takes it for granted as an undoubted and necessary Truth, that the Church is a Society always distinct from the State. Thus it was in the time of St. Cyprian, and therefore he concludes that it must be so now : This is the very Foundation and Corner Stone of his whole Discourse ; remove but this, and it all droppeth to the Ground. And it will not cost us much pains to do it, if we consider that the Church and State in St. Cyprian's time, were under Circumstances widely different from what they are now ; 'tis nothing but the want of this Consideration that hath betray'd our Author (as it hath done many other learned Men) into Error. *One cause of common received Errors in this Point (viz. the Church's being a Society distinct from the State) saith Hooker, seems to be this, that they who embrace true Religion, living in such Common-wealths as are opposite thereunto, and in other publick Affairs retaining civil Communion with such ; are constrain'd for the Exercise of their Religion to*
Eccles.
Polity,
68.
have

have a several Communion with those who are of the same Religion with them. This was the state of the Jewish Church both in Egypt and Babylon, the state of Christian Churches a long time after Christ. And in this Case, because the proper Affairs and Actions of the Church, as it is the Church, hath no dependance on the Laws or upon the Government of the civil state; an Opinion hath thereby grown, that so it should be always: This was it which deceived Alleyn in the Writing of his Apology; and the very same thing we see hath deceived our Author in the Writing of his Vindication.

But now to set things in as clear a Light as possible, and that there may be no disputing about words, I shall lay down all that we hold concerning this Matter in these Propositions following.

1. We hold that the Church is a Society instituted by Christ himself, and that it hath Power in it self to subsist as such, having Governors and Laws of its own independent of any other Society whatsoever.

2 We hold that in all places where the civil State consists of Infidels, the Church and State are two distinct Societies. But

3. Where the civil State consists of Christians, there the Church and State are but one and the same Society.

In the former two we are all agreed; and why there should remain any Dispute about the third, I cannot imagine, for nothing in the World can be more manifest. How should the Church and State make two distinct Societies, where both Church and State consist of the very same Persons?

Two

Two distinct Societies are two distinct Bodies of Men ; and therefore where one and the same Body is both Church and State, the Church and State must be but one and the same Society : 'Tis true indeed, to be a State is one thing, and to be a Church is another ; but yet both the one thing and the other are Accidents, and such as may well consist in the same Subject. For is not the same Man a Member of both ? Do not many the very same Persons bear Authority in both ? Nay is not the King supreme Head and Governor in both ? If this Evidence will not convince Men, I know not what will.

4. We hold that a Christian King is supreme Governor of the Church, within his Dominions ; but an Infidel is not ; because he hath no relation to it, and is incapable of any such Power, being an Enemy to Christ and Christianity.

These are our Principles, and these will justify all our Proceedings in this Matter, and the Church remain safe and sound all the while, as upon a due Examination of the Case I hope to make appear.

For what Reasons and by what Authority the late Arch-bishop of *Canterbury*, with some other Bishops, were deprived, is so notorious, that it would be but an impertinent undertaking here to give an Account of it. That the Government should suffer them quietly to enjoy Places of so great Power and Trust, when they refused to give Security for their Fidelity to it, could not be reasonably expected ; nor is it indeed question'd whether the Government had reason to deprive them ; but whether it took due Methods in doing
C it.

it. Our Author saith, That no Authority, on Earth, can deprive a Bishop, but that of a Council or Synod : As for their Temporalities, the King and Parliament might indeed take away them; but what had they, being but Lay Persons, to do with their *purely spiritual Power* ? In Answer to this, it must be consider'd, what he understands by the *purely spiritual Power* of Bishops. For the words are ambiguous, and may admit of either of these Senses : First we may understand by them that *Character*, which they receive by the Imposition of Hands, at the time of their Consecration, *viz.* the Power of Ordination, of inflicting Church Censures, &c. Or secondly, we may understand their *Relation* to such or such particular Districts, over which they are placed for the Exercise of that Power which they received at their Consecration. Now in the first Sense of the words, the King and Parliament never offer'd to touch the spiritual Power of the Bishops. The Episcopal Character is as firm in them now as ever it was ; and if ever they should be call'd again to the Exercise of it, they would not stand in need of a new Consecration. I know indeed that our Author positively affirms, That there can be no Bishop, but of a particular District ; that a Bishop at large is no Bishop : But why there may not be Bishops at large, as well as Presbyters and Deacons at large, for my part I cannot conceive, nor doth he offer the least Proof of his Assertion. The reason for which he would have the Episcopal Character and the Relation to a particular District so inseparable, is plain enough, *viz.* That we might not allow the

(115)
the Government any Power to deprive Bishops of the one, because we know it cannot deprive them of the other. But altho' he be confessedly a very great Man, an *Ipse dixi* will not serve his turn; he must prove his Assertions as well as others.

Well! but do we allow an Authority in the State, to deprive Bishops even of their Relation to their particular Districts? This is the thing to be enquired into. Our Author chargeth it with terrible Inconveniences, and indeed if we cannot get it rid of them, it must by no means be allowed.

He saith, To allow any such Authority, is to allow of such Principles as are fundamentally destructive of the Church, as a Society distinct from the State, in a time of Persecution; because it supposeth the Authority of the Church even as to Spirituals, to be in Conscience the Right of the civil Magistrate; whence it would follow, that no Man could justly challenge such Authority against the will of the Magistrate, and therefore under Persecution, the Church must cease to be a Society, because it would want Government; without which no Society can subsist. §. 28.

To this we Answer, That the civil Magistrate may be very well allow'd to have this Power of Deprivation, without allowing withal, the Authority of the Church to be of right his. For the Church may have an Authority to govern it self independent of the civil Magistrate; and yet he may have Power over the Persons that bear Rule in it, even so far as, upon just and reasonable Causes, to displace them, and to see that others supply their room. 1 Kings 2. 27. Solomon thrust out Abiathar

from being Priest unto the Lord; but doth it thence follow that the Power of sacrificing and performing the Priestly Office was of right Solomon's? And why may not a Christian King as well thrust out a Person, as disaffected to him, as *Abiathar* was to *Solomon*, from being Bishop, tho' the Episcopal Authority be none of his own? The People of the Jews had as much reason to cry out (and it is no question but that *Adonijah's* Party did so) upon this Action of *Solomon's* as utterly destructive of their whole Religion. Could not they have said, that if we allow *Solomon* this Power of depriving an High Priest, an Idolatrous Prince may chuse whether we shall have ever an one at all, and so destroy our whole Religion whensoever he pleaseth?

Believe me, this sounds much like our Author's Vindication, and I am apt to think he would have made as good a Patron of *Abiathar's* Cause, as he hath of the deprived Bishops. *Zadok* would with him, have been but an Anti priest, and the Ark he bare but like *Jeroboam's* Calves.

But now methinks this Passage betwixt *Solomon* and *Abiathar*, should be a fitter Precedent for us to walk by, than any can be drawn from the Behaviour of the Primitive Christians, during the Reigns of Heathen Emperors; for they never had any Case like ours before them, and 'twas impossible they should: Whereas the Passage I have cited, gives us a Case as exactly like ours, as any History in the World could afford. Are our Bishops Ecclesiasticks? So was *Abiathar*. Is our King a Lay Man? So was *Solomon*. The Church and State were then distinguish'd from one another, just in the same man-

manner they are now. But with the Primitive Christians the Church was one Body, the State was another; the Church Christian, the Emperor Heathen; their Prince the professed Enemy of Christianity, ours the Defender of the Faith; theirs had nothing to do in the Church, ours is supreme Head and Governour of it. If their Prince offer'd to deprive Bishops, which they often did, not only of their Authority but their Life too, it was for no Crime, but out of meer Enmity to the Order it self, and design to ruin the Church. Whereas our Prince is unwillingly brought to proceed against our Bishops; he is forced to it by necessary Reasons of State; and as for the Order it self, he hath shewn himself very tender of it, in supplying it with Persons, whose Merits the whole World acknowledgeth. So that the Primitive Christians were obliged, as they had any regard to Episcopacy it self, to adhere to their Bishops, whom nothing but their Episcopacy render'd obnoxious to the persecuting State; whereas we have not the same Obligation to ours, who are deprived for their disaffection to that Government, which would otherwise uphold both them and their Order.

2. Those who deny this Power of Deprivation to the civil Magistrate, allow him another, which they themselves must acknowledge, altogether as destructive of the Church as this; and that in two Instances: The first is, The Power of keeping Episcopal Sees vacant. The second is, The depriving of the inferiour Clergy of their Cures. Both which have been put in practice among us,
with-

without any contradiction ; particularly the former in a most notorious manner, during the late unhappy Reign. Now it is a very strange thing, that the same Magistrate should not be allow'd, for good Reasons, to remove a Bishop from his See, and place another therein, who is allow'd, for no Reason, to keep a See vacant as long as he sees good. I appeal to the Conscience of our Vindicator himself, whether he thinks most destructive to the Church. Can a Church subsist without a Bishop ? I am sure he will answer in the negative : For it can't subsist without an *Head and Principle of Unity* ; both which, he saith, is the *Bishop*. §. 16. The very *Conge d'elire*, upon a Vacancy, supposeth the dependance every Church, among us, hath upon the King, as to the choice of its Bishop ; and how it comes to pass that he hath not all this while tax'd the allowance of it, as an Error fundamentally destructive of the Church, as a Society distinct from the State in a time of Persecution ? For 'tis as much so as the present Deprivation. The Turk takes a more likely Course to extirpate the Christian Religion, in not suffering Churches when fallen, to be rebuilt, than that Prince would do, who should pull down old Churches to erect new ones in their stead.

Again, The Power of depriving Presbyters of their Cures, nothing is more common than for an Act of Parliament to do that ; and why hath not this been spoken against ? Is not their Power over their Parishes as well Spiritual, as that of the Bishop over his Diocess ? Doth not therefore a State-deprivation of these confound that distinction betwixt

twixt Church and State, as much as a State deprivation of the other? And will it not expose the Church to as certain Ruin in the time of Persecution? For the Church can no more subsist without Presbyters, than it can without a Bishop. All that I can foresee likely to be reply'd to this, is, That the Bishop alone is the proper Pastor of all the Souls within his District, and that the Parochial Clergy are but his Curates: Be it so; yet forasmuch as the Bishop cannot personally supply all the spiritual Necessities of his Charge, without the assistance of such Curates, a Power to deprive him of these his Curates, is in effect, to disable him for the performance of his Duty; and whether that would not be as pernicious to the Church, as any thing which could be drawn from our allowing the validity of the present Deprivation, let our Vindicator judge. In short therefore, to put the Matter upon some issue, I would demand of him, whether the Kings of *England* have done well or ill in assuming such Power, in the two Instances I have here mentioned, or the Church in allowing it them? If ill? why did he not endeavour to correct the Abuse before now? Did he not see the danger of it till now? Or was there never a Prince in *England* likely to abuse such a Power till now? This he will not, this he cannot say. If he say that both King and Church did well; let him prove it, and with his Argument I'll justify the present Deprivation.

Now from hence we may observe thus much, that for what ill Consequences may arise from our allowing the civil Magistrate all that Power which
the

the present Deprivation necessarily implies, our Vindicator is as much obliged to answer for them as we ; since he hath hitherto allow'd the same Power, if not a greater : Not that I think any such ill Consequences can arise from it, as he imagines ; for the Principles I have above laid down, will sufficiently justify the present Deprivation, and yet secure the Church from the Invasions of a persecuting Prince. For what tho' we allow the Church and State to be but one Society in a Christian Kingdom, it don't follow that we must allow the same where the State is Heathen : What tho' we allow our civil Governours, being Christians, upon just and weighty Causes to deprive Bishops of their Sees ? Must we therefore allow an Heathen Magistrate Power to destroy the Church ? The King's Supremacy over all Persons, and in all Causes Ecclesiastical, is confirm'd by our Canons, acknowledged by our Subscriptions, and declared every day in our Pulpits ; but this all the while supposes him a Christian, and no Persecutor of the Church. If he once turn Infidel, he falls from his Supremacy in Church Affairs ; he ceaseth to be Head of the Church, when he ceaseth to be a Christian : For Headship supposeth Union with the Body ; and therefore what destroys the Union (as Infidelity doth) destroys the Headship. An evident Demonstration that that Authority in the Church may justly be allow'd to a Christian Prince, which must not, cannot be allow'd an Heathen ; and if so, what becomes of all those dreadful Consequences which our Vindicator supposeth to follow from our allowing the validity of the late De-

Deprivation? They are all vanish'd, and together with them the whole strength of his Argument. So that, notwithstanding all he hath said to the contrary, we may by very safe and innocent Principles, defend those to be truly Catholick, whom he calls Schismatical and Anti bishops; the other Bishops may safely communicate with them as their Brethren, and we with our Bishops, as our Fathers in the Lord.

And now let us see against whom the Charge of Schism and Heresie is most justly to be laid, whether against the Body of the Nation, communicating with the present Arch-bishop and the rest of the Bishops, or against our Vindicator and his Party, which separate from them, and we shall desire no other Judge than the Vindicator himself; who, I hope, will not complain of unjust Usage, if he should upon the Issue prove Self condemn'd.

He saith, *That Heresie doth not necessarily imply an Error in Fundamentals; for he that separates upon a bare Opinion is guilty of the greater Sin.* Now that the late Deprivation was invalid is but a bare Opinion, nay I have proved it a Mistake; how then will he that separates upon it, clear himself of Heresie? I know what our Vindicator will reply, *That we, not they, are the Separatists; that they are exactly where they were, hold the same Doctrins as they did ever, nay as we our selves did formerly; that they do not divide, but are divided from.* If Paradoxes would serve for Answers, I must confess these were sufficient. Are we Separatists? From whom? Do we divide? From what Church? Have we not the same Sacraments, the same Wor-

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ship,

§. 24.

§. 30.

ship, and the same Faith as formerly ? Right ; but we have not the same Bishops : Whose fault is that ? Is it not theirs who refuse to acknowledge those Powers whom God hath set over them ? This did not the People of God, under the Law, who pray'd for a *Nebuchodonosor* that he might live, and they do him service, *Baruch* 1. This did not the Primitive Christians, who had *Supplications, Intercessions and giving of Thanks*, for Heathen Emperors, *1 Tim.* 2. Lastly, thus did not our Saviour himself, who both paid Tribute, and submitted even his Life to the Roman Power, leaving *an eternal Example*, saith our Church (Homily against wilful Rebellion, 2d part) *and such as may serve for all, to teach us to obey Princes, though Strangers, wicked and wrongful, when God, for our Sins, shall place such over us.* In the Name of God, how much worse than a Stranger, wicked and wrongful Prince, do they take his present Majesty to be, that rather than he should be obey'd, the Church must be torn in pieces, the Nation embroyl'd, and both expos'd to certain ruin ? Is this to continue in the Church of *England* ? Is this to hold her Doctrins ? I wonder how any Man can say so, that ever read the first and second Homilies against Rebellion. We have in this Vindicator a very remarkable Instance of human Frailty, how far Prejudice and Passion will prevail over the greatest Knowledge and the clearest Understanding. Nor is this the only Doctrine our Vindicator hath left the Church in ; but in another, than which she hath maintain'd none more zealously since the Reformation ; and that is the Kings Supremacy

prelacy over all Persons and in all Causes Ecclesiastical ; which as he hath deny'd in this particular Instance of the Deprivation, so hath he endeavour'd utterly to subvert, by asserting, the Church and State to be two Societies so distinct, as that the King can bear no part in the Church Government. It is the very Argument that both Papists and Puritans make use of; the one to establish the Supremacy of the Pope, the other that of the Kirk ; and if it will serve his turn, it will serve theirs ; which I dare say is more than he desires. Surely he was put to hard shifts for an Argument against us, when he borrow'd one from either of those Parties, in the Interests whereof he would be ashamed to appear. Now to conclude this Point ; since our Vindicator separates from the Communion of our Church, and justifieth this Separation by Principles, and those false ones too, he is an Heretick, according to his own Definition of Heresie, § 23, 24. So that he is under a necessity either of recanting his Definition, or forsaking the Separation : The one is so true, he cannot recant it ; the other so unjustifiable, I pray God he forsake it.

Again ; as Heresy signifies an Error in Fundamentals, I know not how our Vindicator will clear himself of it, even in this Sense. For if, as he himself saith, To hold Doctrins destructive of the Church, as a Society, be to err fundamentally, he is guilty of an Error in Fundamentals ; as will thus appear. The very Essence of every Society consists in the Union and Communion of its Members, and therefore whatsoever Doctrins naturally tend

§. 28.

S. 25.

to separation, naturally tend to the destruction of the Church, as a Society. Now our Vindicator hath in this very Discourse laid down such Principles as will justify the most unreasonable Separations in the World. He hath these Words; *Such Opinions as are not of their own nature heretical, begin to be so when they begin to be characteristical of distinct Communions: And that they do, not only when Men designedly separate from others on that very account, because they are not of the same Opinions; but also when they venture upon such Practices on account of their singular Opinions, wherein others cannot communicate with them, because they cannot joyn with them in these their singular Opinions. Then plainly the differing in such Opinions makes a difference of Communion unavoidable.* What the particular Opinions and Practices were which he had an Eye to when he wrote this, may very easily be imagined; but since he hath not thought fit to mention them, I will not. We may be sure he designed this Paragraph for the use of his own Party, but it will serve all the Separatists in the World as well as them; and indeed I despair of ever convincing any Separatist that his Separation is sinful, if what is here laid down be true: And I would fain see how our Vindicator himself could deal with one. Suppose we then him undertaking one that declines Communion with us, because of our Ceremonies, as in this manner,

Vindicator. I wonder, Sir, that after so many Obligations that Christ hath laid upon us all to Love and Unity, you can still continue in your Separation from our Church.

Seps.

Separatist. And is it not as great a Wonder, on the other Hand, that you will have no regard to tender Consciences, but still continue the Causes, for which we can do no less than separate?

Vindicat. Why, what Causes do you mean?

Separat. I mean your use of Ceremonies, as the Cross in Baptism, kneeling at the Lord's Table, the Surplice, &c.

Vindicat. And is there any Harm in all these?

Separat. You think there is none, but we think there is.

Vindicat. I, but you are under a Mistake, and I do not doubt but to make you sensible of it, if you will but consider that——

Separat. Consider! I have considered enough about them, and yet cannot alter my Judgment of them.

Vindicat. Well! That these Ceremonies are unlawful, is after all but your bare Opinion; but that Obedience to Superiors, and Communion with your Brethren are necessary Duties, this you know for certain; now it is but reasonable, That certain Knowledge should weigh more with you than bare Opinion: So that notwithstanding your Opinion you ought to joyn with us.

Separat. Hold you there Sir, don't you your self say, That when Men venture upon such Practices, on account of their singular Opinions, wherein others cannot communicate with them, because they cannot joyn with them in those their singular Opinions, then plainly the differing in such Opinions makes a Difference of Communion unavoidable? Come Sir, to be short with you, your selves are wholly the Cause of

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of this Breach. *Were you lovers of Unity you would not do that which, even in the Opinions of your Brethren, might occasion a Breach of Unity, were there otherwise no great necessity for doing it : And in this Case I am sure there is none.*

Now what the Vindicator would reply I cannot conceive; for my part I should be terribly confounded, were I in his Case. The only Remedy left him, that I know of, is even to eat his own Words, to damn his own Positions as Heretical, being fundamentally destructive of the Church, and if he doth that, he will be very much to seek how to defend his own Separation. And now I appeal to the Conscience of our Vindicator himself, whether he can think that Separation justifiable, which will admit of no other Defence than what is common to those which he himself hath so often condemn'd? In Disputes of this nature, the suffering Party is apt to look upon their Adversaries as Men carried away by worldly Interests, and to think themselves in the right, because they get nothing but trouble by their Opinions. But it is to be consider'd, that Prejudice and Passion will blind the Judgment, as well as Self-love and carnal Interests; Error hath an Army of Martyrs, as big, perhaps, tho' not near so noble, as is that of Truth: I would therefore have our Vindicator to think that he may be mistaken in this present Controversie, tho' I will not say through weakness of Judgment, yet I dare say through the prevalency of Inclination. For I am verily persuaded, that to judge impartially in this Matter, there is as much necessity of Self-denial on his side, as there is on ours.

I shall add but a word or two more, and that
shall

shall be to the deprived Bishops ; that they would seriously lay to Heart how dismal the Consequences of this Separation may be, and yet how easie it is for them to put an end to it. There is no remedy for it, but that one side or the other recede. As for the Bishops in Possession of their Sees, for them to recede would signifie nothing, unless the Government would concur with them. And now that should be expected, I cannot conceive : There is more likelihood that the Attempt would be an occasion of suppressing the Order it self. But as for the deprived Bishops, it is but their resignation of an empty Title, and all is well. And one would think that 'twould be no hard Matter to persuade them to do so small a thing for the peace of that Church, the preservation whereof was, not long since, more dear to them than their Lives. What is all their Affection lost so soon ? Have they no more Bowels of Mercy and Compassion for this miserable and wounded Church ? The true Mother could give up all Pretensions to her own Child when she saw, that through her obstinate contending for it, it was like to be cut in two ; and if rather than quit their Claim, they will chuse to see the Church torn in pieces ; the World will be apt to think, that since they have lost the Affection, it is but just they lose, withal, the Authority of Fathers. Did the Salvation but of one Soul depend upon their maintaining their Title to their Sees, God forbid that any Man should urge them to a Resignation : But since their contending, is like to be the ruin of Multitudes, there is nothing that Christian Charity obligeth them to so much, as to desist.

F I N I S.

